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European Communities: The summit meeting of the member states of the European Communities (EC), which opens today in The Hague, will be an important test of the outlook for restoring momentum to the European integration movement.

The summit was originally proposed by the French last July to provide "a time for reflection" about the Communities' past and future, and to consider general European problems. Since then, it has become clear that the main business of the meeting will be to talk about the internal strengthening of the Communities, the admission of new members, and the relationship between the two.

The French aim principally to obtain a "definitive" agreement on agricultural financing, and they want a veto on changes in it both during and after negotiations on British entry. The other EC members, however, want to pin the French down on the opening of such negotiations and fear that a "definitive" agreement would not leave sufficient room for the adjustments in the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) which British entry would necessitate.

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a suitable agricultural settlement is the only firm French condition for opening negotiations with Britain. The summit and the hard negotiations on CAP later this month should clarify whether the French position has in fact changed this much.

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In any case, the member countries appear still to have quite different views on how the Communities should be "politically" strengthened, even though they do agree that some sort of strengthening should accompany enlargement. While the EC Commission has appealed for the bolstering of existing community institutions, the French remain opposed to increased powers for the European Parliament and a restoration of majority voting in the Council.

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Czechoslovakia: Conservative party leader Lubomir Strougal has almost completed the empire building he began a year ago in the Czech lands of Bohemia and Moravia.

Since he assumed command of the newly created Czech party bureau in November 1968, Strougal has struggled to place his followers in positions of authority in the region's party, government, and mass organizations. The removal last week of Cestmir Cisar as head of the Czech National Council--the Czech parliament--and the ouster of 62 other deputies from the council are measures of Strougal's success in eliminating those individuals who were prominent during the Alexander Dubcek reform movement in 1968.

Cisar is a long-time reformer whose reputation was made by his early opposition to Novotny's policies. He was popular in March 1968 when Czechoslovak students demonstrated in support of his candidacy for the post of president of the republic. Although Ludvik Svoboda was elected president, ironically to reassure Soviet leaders suspicious of political trends in Prague, Cisar subsequently became a party secretary and one of the leaders most identified with the liberal reform program. After the invasion, however, Cisar gradually became one of the "realists" who favored cooperation with the Soviets as the most expedient course. He was removed from the party secretariat last August.

Strougal continues to strengthen his own position as the number-two man in Czechoslovakia after party first secretary Husak. Once thought to be seeking to challenge Husak, Strougal has been forced into line as a result of Moscow's decision to support Husak's leadership. Lately, Strougal seems to have assumed a less dogmatic posture, probably hoping in part to garner whatever support he can from among moderates in the Czech party.

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South Vietnam: Communist forces are preparing for another round of intense military activity. Statements by recent ralliers to the allied side point to an upsurge of fighting beginning in early December. One prisoner, who was recently captured north of Saigon, claims that his unit is set to participate in a countrywide offensive that will kick off shortly. Other prisoners have said that the Communists will emphasize guerrilla and commando tactics in the coming offensive, hoping thereby to inflict heavy losses on the allies at relatively little cost to themselves.



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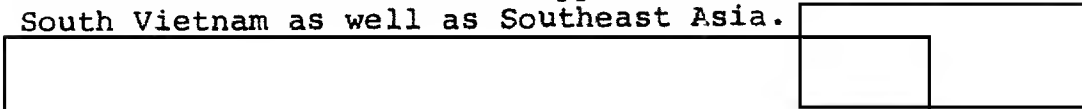
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New Zealand: Prime Minister Holyoake's National Party will have a slightly smaller working majority in the new parliament, but it should have little difficulty governing. A strong challenge by the opposition Labor Party in the elections of 29 November reduced the National lead from seven seats to four in the expanded 84-seat parliament. Although the campaign was largely dominated by personalities and domestic issues, Holyoake had indicated that if he were returned to office the government would continue to support the US effort in South Vietnam as well as Southeast Asia.



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